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LETTER DATED 17 JANUARY 1992 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF LEBANON TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to inform you that the Lebanese Government has decided to request the Security Council to extend the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which expires on 31 January 1992, for a further period of six months, on the basis of the provisions of Security Council resolutions 425 (1978), 426 (1978), 501 (1982), 508 (1982), 509 (1982) and of all other relevant resolutions and decisions of the Security Council.

Since the last renewal of UNIFIL, some major constructive developments have taken place which have further strengthened the position of the Lebanese Army and internal security forces in the south and in particular in villages adjacent to the occupied zone. The units deployed in this area have been fortified and restructured, rendering them a more cohesive force. In addition, the Army has confiscated all heavy and medium weapons and has banned all forms of armed presence in areas under its control, including Palestinian refugee camps, ports and the coastal region of the country.

Furthermore, my Government is pleased to report that perfect coordination exists between the command of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army, whose deployment has proceeded smoothly in areas in the south. The two Forces enjoy a constructive relationship on the highest level and currently consultations are under way so as to ascertain the best way in which the Lebanese Army can take over additional areas from UNIFIL.

In the wake of all these positive developments and at a time when the Lebanese Government has delivered the nation unto a process of normalization, Israel has amplified its refusal to withdraw from southern Lebanon despite the participation of both countries in the Arab-Israeli Peace Conference, which began in Madrid and proceeded to Washington. While Lebanon is doing its utmost to restore peace and stability to the area, the reaction of Israel has been to step up its efforts to impede and thwart any attempt to bring harmony to Lebanon. As a pretext for perpetuating its occupation of the south, Israel seeks to destabilize Lebanon so as to prevent the Lebanese Army from keeping

law and order. Last year alone, Lebanon delivered 16 letters of complaint to the Secretary-General, detailing a series of bombardments and assaults on the civilian population by Israeli Forces and their proxies.

The Lebanese Government calls the attention of the Council to the gravity of the increase of hostilities in southern Lebanon, and implores the Council to take new and unprecedented steps to bring an end to the violence, through the prompt implementation and galvanization of its resolution 425 (1978), which will enable the Lebanese Government to extend its authority over the entire south of the country up to its internationally recognized boundaries. At a time when the United Nations, and in particular the Security Council, is witnessing growing strength as part of the new world order, Lebanon expects that Israel's transgressions against its sovereignty will be brought to a swift and decisive end.

In this context, the presence of UNIFIL continues to remain of utmost necessity to provide much of the needed assistance and international support for the civilian population faced with the brute and arbitrary nature of the Israeli occupation. However, this assistance cannot be a substitute for the fulfilment of UNIFIL's original mandate as stipulated in Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which is to ensure the withdrawal of Israeli Forces from Lebanon and to assist the Government of Lebanon, through the Lebanese Army and internal security forces, in re-establishing its legitimate and effective authority in the area.

The Lebanese Government takes this opportunity to pay tribute to the UNIFIL command, troops and administrators, and to the troop-contributing countries for their efforts and sacrifices in serving the cause of peace. It also expresses its deep appreciation for the tireless endeavours of the Secretary-General and his aides, which are instrumental in the valuable presence and mission of UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dr. Khalil MAKKAWI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative